



CONNECTICUT
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 17, 2015**

HB 6765, An Act Concerning Interpreter Qualifications

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6765, An Act Concerning Interpreter Qualifications**.

Before outlining concerns we have with regard to the bill, it's important to point out that Connecticut hospitals treat everyone who comes through their doors 24 hours a day, regardless of ability to pay.

This is a time of unprecedented change in healthcare, and Connecticut hospitals are leading the charge to transform the way care is provided. They are focused on providing safe, accessible, equitable, affordable, patient-centered care for all, and they are finding innovative solutions to integrate and coordinate care to better serve their patients and communities.

This bill is written to strengthen and standardize the qualifications of interpreters serving deaf and hard of hearing persons, but it would not do so. CHA and our member hospitals support efforts to improve continually the skills of qualified interpreters; however, the requirements outlined in HB 6765 would be extremely premature, considering the current landscape, and are more likely to result in a significant decrease to an already limited interpreter pool serving the deaf and hard of hearing population in Connecticut.

Our state does not have a large pool of interpreters for deaf and hard of hearing persons. An even smaller portion of that limited pool is willing to serve healthcare organizations due to the unpredictable hours and demands that come with serving in these types of settings. Many in healthcare, including hospitals, must supplement this limited pool with interpreters who can service Connecticut remotely – something provisions in this bill would make more difficult.

Ideally the provisions of this bill may someday be achievable and truly benefit deaf and hard of hearing patients. However, in the context of the current situation, this bill would negatively impact deaf and hard of hearing patients rather than serve them. If HB 6765 passes as written, it will result directly in deaf and hard of hearing persons having fewer interpreters available to them.